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One hundred beautiful lessons in  
**LETTERING**

By *John D. Smith*

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One hundred Loose Leaf Lessons in  
**LETTERING**

*With Pen & Brush*

& Gordon System - Adapting the familiar Music Staff as an  
aid to correct alignment and construction of letters

& Introducing a series of alphabets for Show  
Card Writing and Commercial Art work

*By Wm. Hugh Gordon*

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**GORDON'S LETTERING FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES**



Lesson No. 1

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a b c d e f g - A B C D E F G

Sans Serif letters ~ Variouslly termed, Block, Egyptian etc. For the purpose of Classification in this series of lessons, these and all other letters composed of even width elements ~ with or without serifs are classed as Gothic. ~

a b c d e f g - A B C D E F G

Roman letters are composed of accented elements or light and heavy strokes in proper arrangement ~ The heavy strokes in each letter being known as "The Accent".

a b c d e f g A B C D E F G

Text lettering ~ Historically known as "Gothic" from the Style Gothic in the Arts. ~ Little use is found for Text lettering in commercial work on account of its illegibility but several plain modifications may be found valuable. ~

a b c d e f g A B C D E F G

Slant letters ~ regardless of classification are known generally as "Italics" ~ From the four classes of letters here mentioned, hundreds of letter styles may be devised. ~

These lessons deal chiefly with rapid lettering for commercial purposes, as used by modern commercial artists, show card writers, moving picture title writers, etc., and are mostly rapid single stroke modifications of existing type styles. We adopt the printer's terms in classifying the various styles. We call attention to the fact that historically the term Gothic refers to the style Gothic in the arts and in lettering involves most all the text styles and source of the letter styles of Roman origin, which in classification is more confusing than present-day commercial or printer's terms.

The student or letterer who desires to devise or design a certain characteristic style based on any particular series of letter or type style will

avoid confusion and difficulty by first learning to classify any given example as being based on a certain classification, regardless of its exterior treatment or decoration.

All letters having elementary parts composed of even width strokes are classed as Gothic. All letters having elementary parts composed of accented strokes are classed as Roman, except the Texts, which include Old English, German, Church, Uncial, half Uncial, etc., which are all classed as Text. These being of an extremely illegible character are very seldom used commercially, and will receive but little attention in this series of lessons, but classified simply as Text.

All slant letters are classed as Italics, which

primarily resembles writing or script. In presenting the subject, text and illustrations of this series of lessons in lettering, no attempt has been made to cover the historical origin of letter styles or methods of production practiced by lettercrafters antedating the later generation, for whom the subject, art and practice of lettering has been reduced to its least common multiple, both in point of style and method of production. In brief, the entire subject and illustrative lessons have been prepared with the object of eliminating the highly technical explanations and difficult methods of producing a class of hand lettering that possesses commercial value and artistic merit.

The variety of letter styles and types in common



## ONE HUNDRED LESSONS IN LETTERING

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use today simply defies classification or enumeration. A memorization of the aggregate would be a useless burden to assume and would serve but of little benefit except to the printer.

In order to simplify the proposition as it appears in these lessons we call attention to the fact that from a common basic principle have been evolved four different styles or four elementary classifications upon which are variously constructed all the letter styles or alphabets in common use by letterers, printers, sign painters, designers and engravers.

These four classifications are now known as Gothic, Roman, Text and Italic, Capital and Small Letters, which the printers term Upper Case and Lower Case, in the order named. These are shown and the principles explained in direct contrast in Plate 1. These examples are used as a comparative medium and are not to be copied in this lesson—but studied thoroughly for future reference.



Proper method for holding  
the lettering pen

The tools and materials needed by a lettercrafter are few, but they must be of best quality, especially the brushes. The lettering brushes used by expert show card writers and commercial artists are known as red sable riggers, which range in size from No. 4 to No. 20. Smaller than No. 4 are useless, as they will not retain their shape or point. Riggers are round brushes, but shaped to a flat chisel edge point in a dab of color on a scrap of cardboard, which takes the place of a palette. If the ferrule is of metal it should be wrapped with waxed linen thread, which eliminates gripping of the fingers. To secure best results a brush should be held nearly vertical, either between the thumb and index finger or the thumb, first and second fingers. This is a matter of individual preference, but in either case the vertical position should be maintained. Note illustration showing how to hold a brush.

For brush work any good brand of ready to use show card colors answers all ordinary purposes. Waterproof or ordinary India ink is fine for pen work, but too expensive. Heretofore, good jet black lettering ink was hard to procure at any price. A welcome addition to the letterer's kit is the new tar black Speedball lettering ink specially adapted for use in lettering pens.

Pens required by modern letterers, show card writers and students are, one set, five sizes, Style A Speedball pens; one set, five sizes of Style B Speedball pens; one set of eleven sizes, Hunt's No. 400 lettering pens; No. 71 music writers, and a selection of Hunt's stub pens for extra fine work or trimming up letters.

No rule of applied spacing measurements proves practical in the spacing of hand lettering. There are three general arrangements of spacing—ordinary, close (or condensed), and wide extended. In ordinary spacing approximately one-quarter to one-third the width of a letter is allowed for space. The narrow letters are allowed more space than the full width letters and ovals.

Condensed spacing is resorted to to conserve space, also there are many styles of lettering that read better and present a more artistic appearance when condensed than wide spaced; wide spacing often denotes emphasis. In either event we endeavor to preserve a uniform tone in both the page of lettering and the background. The height of the extenders, as a rule, determines the width of space between the lines. Do not attempt to crowd too many letters in a given space. We can forgive a stretch of wide letter spacing to fill a space, but a bunch of crowded letters at the end of a line or page will ruin the general appearance of an otherwise good job.

The safest way is to make a quick preliminary pencil layout or sketch of the copy in which the errors of spacing may be corrected during the inking up process.



Vertical position for using  
the lettering brush

Lesson No. 2

The Music Staff contains 5 Lines - and 4 Spaces

LETTERED UPWARD.

f d c b a

By pencil ruling a music staff scale - of any desired height 4 spaces high - with 5 lines numbered downward - THUS -

1 2 3 4 5

We have the easiest and most correct scale for the alignment of all small letters in the alphabet in reading form.

Handy

“To see clearly is difficult. A thing happens in only one way, yet a hundred witnesses will describe it in a hundred ways. Shakespeare, emperor among writers, used comparison to make you ‘see’ what he meant.”

Comparison, not exaggerated or overdone, is a good working tool. By it we remember things most clearly. It is the most faithful servant of the artist or the artisan.

By comparison we classify letter styles, and as a certain method of preparing guide lines for the proper alignment and arrangement of letters we use the ever-familiar music staff—five lines and four spaces—as shown in Plate 2.

In music to distinguish tones we use seven letters, c, d, e, f, g, a, b. To represent them in writing we use the notes which are either white or black; these letters are repeated in this order through the whole system of tones. The notes are placed on and between five lines drawn one above the other, called the staff. For those notes for which the staff does not suffice we use the so-called added or leger lines, upon, above and below which the notes are placed.

An enlarged edition of this music staff may be pencil ruled in any size to suit the requirements or heights of the letters to be made.

Lesson No. 3

1 Cap line  
2 Top line  
3 Waist line  
4 Base line  
5 DESCENDER line

These small letters are but 2 spaces in height - having no ascenders or descenders.

a c e i m n o r s u v w x z

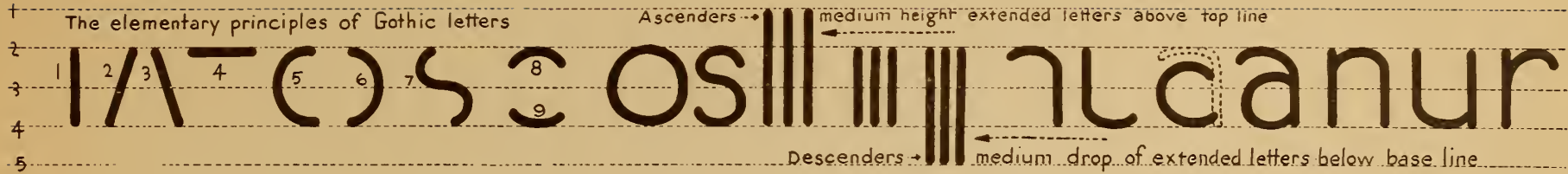
These letters, being composed of uniform width strokes are classed as GOTHIC — Either with or without Serifs, as here illustrated.

The small letters (lower case), a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x and z, occupy the two center spaces of the staff between lines 2 and 4. Line No. 3 is the waist line, indicating the parallel center of the small letter.

Pencil rule a fine line staff with one-fourth inch spaces. Pencil sketch the forms of the letters and ink over with a style B Speedball lettering pen, using a firm, vigorous stroke. Keep the flat bill of the pen evenly engaging the writing surface.



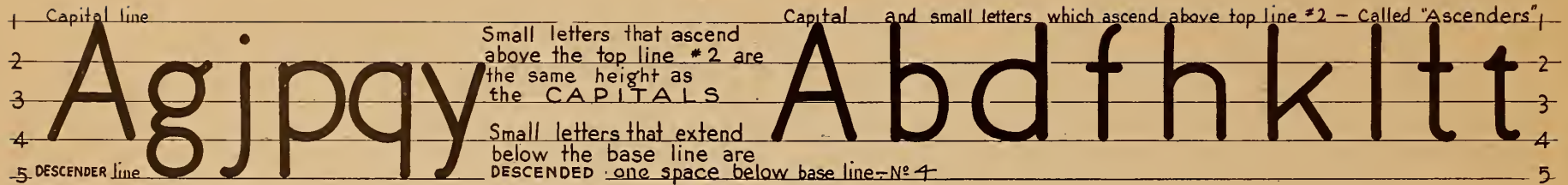
Lesson No. 4



Pencil rule a staff with one-fourth inch spaces. Pencil sketch the elementary principles of Gothic letters, 1 to 9. These elements virtually constitute the basic principles of all letter forms.

Pencil rule an enlarged staff on practice paper, one-half inch spaces, and enlarge the elements to fit the space. Ink trace the pencil-sketched elements with the lettering pen.

## Lesson No. 5



Small letters (lower case), g, j, p, q, y, which extend below the base line, No. 4, are called Descenders. Small letters, b, d, f, h, k, l, t, which extend above the top line, No. 2, are called Ascenders. In either case, where the extended letters do not exceed one space in size or drop half the height of the small letters, they are called medium extended letters.

Pencil rule a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch staff and reproduce these characters in pencil sketch, after which they should be inked up with lettering pen.

Enlarge to  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch space staff. Repeat as often as necessary for practice.

Capital letters (upper case), are ascenders, having the same base line, No. 4, as small letters and the same height as the ascenders, line 1, of the staff.

Lesson No. 6

Here we have the staff with added or leger lines, which are used only in case high ascenders or low descenders are called for.

Frequently we have lettering in which the design calls for high ascenders and medium descenders, or vice versa.

Pencil a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch staff with leger lines for high

ascenders and low descenders. Letter the exercises as shown.

Pencil a staff with upper leger line for high ascenders and medium descenders. Letter the exercises as shown.

Pencil a staff for medium ascenders and low descenders, and letter the exercises as shown.



Lesson No. 7

Line e. #5 and space f- of the music staff are left blank - *Not used* in making CAPITAL LETTERS mixed with small letters.

The Gothic capitals (upper case) are the same height as ascenders. In making a line of lettering containing all capital letters the staff principle of alignment may be dispensed with, as all that is necessary is a top and base guide line, but whenever a line of lettering contains both caps and small letters, or all small letters, the staff arrangement is necessary.

Pencil a top and base line  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch apart, sketch the forms of the capitals with pencil, then trace with lettering pen. Arrows show the direction in which the strokes should be made.

Try the experiment with top and base line one inch apart, then  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches apart.



Lesson No. 8

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
The plain GOTHIC - (Letters of uniform width stroke) with the addition of serifs, which adds materially to its general appearance.

This is the same proposition as Lesson 7, but beginning with the capital R serifs have been added to the letters, which changes their appearance, but not the basic principle. Serifs are sometimes called "spurs" or "plugs" by show card and sign writers,

consequently a Gothic letter finished in this manner, with a round or square terminal or sharp pointed serif would be called a spur or plug Gothic. The principles of serifs are illustrated and explained in Lessons 10 and 11.

ONE HUNDRED LESSONS IN LETTERING

Lesson No. 9

f	1	Cap line & - for small letters that ascend above the regular top line #2 - b.d.f.h.k.l.t - also all CAPITAL LETTERS	1
d e	2	Top line of small letters	2
b c	3	Waist line of small letters	3
g a	4	Base line of small letters and of ALL CAPITALS.	4
e f	5	DESCENDER line - for small letters which EXTEND below the regular base line #4 g.j.p.q.y	5

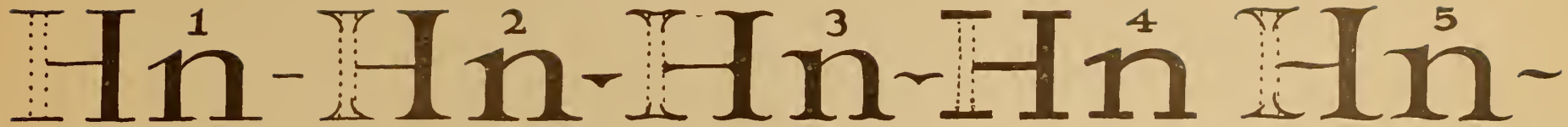
Photography

Pencil line a scale,  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch spaces, 10-inch long and letter the word "Photography" in a space five inches long. Letter the same word in the remaining five inches; to the second add the serifs.

Pencil a scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch spaces, 10-inch long, and

letter the same word in the entire 10-inch space. This will be a spacing exercise with a word beginning with a capital and containing ordinary small letters, medium ascenders and descenders.

Lesson No. 10



Webster defines the “serif” or “seriph” as one of the fine lines crossing a letter at the top or bottom, as of I. In the original Roman letter the serifs are sharp pointed and rounded gracefully in the angle formed by the vertical element. Note Fig. 1 and 2.

Fig. 3 shows a serif gracefully formed with a curved line and rounded into the vertical.

Fig. 4, square terminal heavy line serif.

Fig. 5, a compound curve serif rounded into the vertical.

Examples 1 to 5 are illustrations of different serifs on Roman letters.

Lesson No. 11

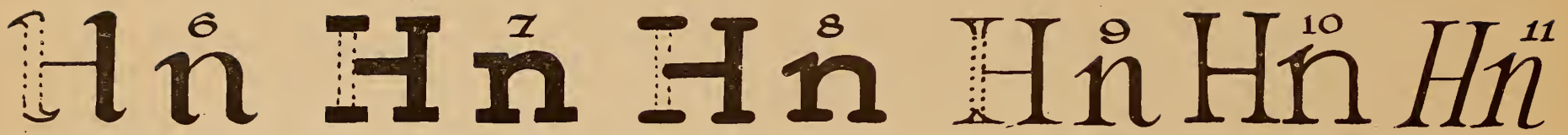


Fig. 6 is called a "swash serif." It is used principally where speed is an essential. These may be easily made in outline with small sizes of lettering pens, or in single strokes with Hunt's 400, or single stroke lettering brushes.

Fig. 7 is the heavy square terminal serif Gothic letter. Use Style A Speedball pen.

Fig. 8 is the heavy round terminal Gothic letter. Use a Style B pen.

Fig. 9 is a light face Roman letter, sharp serif, swash terminal on the n. Use Hunt's 400 Pen No. 2.

Fig. 10 is characteristic Roman letter, medium heavy serif sloped, not rounded into the vertical. Use medium fine rigger brush.

Fig. 11 is a Roman Italic sharp serif, swash terminal on the n, for which a music pen or Hunt's 400 No. 2½ pen is used.





Lesson No. 12



Condensed, single stroke Gothic lower case, made with a No. 4 or No. 5 Style B Speedball.

1. Rule a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch space staff, 10-inch long; pencil sketch the copy as shown and ink trace same.

2. Rule a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch space staff, 10-inch long; use copy up to letter K.

3. Rule another  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch space staff, 10-inch long; begin with K and space out to character & in 10-inch space.

## Lesson No. 13

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz &amp;

Single stroke, round terminal serif Gothic. This is the same letter as Lesson 12, changed in style and appearance by using a larger pen and adding serifs. Any of the serifs shown in Lessons 10 and 11 could be added to this alphabet in place of the one shown. If the operator masters a single stroke Gothic alphabet thoroughly it is simply a question of adding different style serifs to the entire alphabet. Where this

can be accomplished without copying or mixing the styles the operator may claim the ability to make as many different alphabets as the different style serifs used, as all Gothic alphabets have the same basic principle, and are formed by a combination of the same elements. The change in style appearance is caused by the serifs.

Lesson No. 14

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz.

All letters or alphabets made on a slant are generally called Italics. Thus we have four classifications of Italics based on the Gothic, Roman, Text and the true Italics which partake more of the script character, which will be taken up later.

The above copy is a plain single stroke Gothic Italic almost identical with Lesson 13, except the

slant and a slight change in the g and k, which is a matter of personal preference. These letters should be pencil sketched and inked up on a  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch staff. In order to preserve a uniform degree of slant we indicate the desired degree by penciling a series of guide lines on the staff, using an adjustable head T-square.

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ONE HUNDRED LESSONS IN LETTERING

Lesson No. 15

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ

Showing the upper case Gothic in contrast of vertical and slant, same style serifs. Top and base line staff will be the only necessary guide lines for

these caps; if necessary a waist or center parallel line may be used as a practice guide, which helps determine the parallel centers of oval elements.



Lesson No. 16

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z &

Gothic poster style in which a change of appearance is effected by making the vertical and horizontal elements slightly curved instead of straight.

Make  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch space top and base guide lines.

Pencil sketch characters and ink in with a No. 2 Style B Speedball pen. Repeat, using a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch space and a No. 1 Style B pen. Place one-half the alphabet in a 10-inch space.

1311  
.96

ONE HUNDRED LESSONS IN LETTERING

Lesson No. 17

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z & .**  
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N . . . . . P O S T E R . S T Y L E . G O T H I C . . . . . O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Another poster style Gothic made easily and quickly with a No. 3 Style A square point Speedball

pen. Note the oval elements are flat on the top.

Lesson No. 18

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz - Characteristic ❖

The selection of a letter style or alphabet must be determined only after careful consideration or knowledge of what manner of pens or brushes may be best utilized in the construction of the elementary strokes. The characteristic style of this letter, which is practically a single stroke Gothic with serifs, is effected or rather imposed by the pen with which it was made, a No. 4 Style A Speedball,

which when held and operated in normal position (pointing toward the upper left hand corner of the page) produces a diamond shape dot, or the terminal of every stroke is a sharp point.

Pencil a scale  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch spaces; proceed as in making ordinary spur Gothic. The pen suggested will produce the desired result. This style letter is very effective when close spaced or condensed.

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ONE HUNDRED LESSONS IN LETTERING

Lesson No. 19

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Capitals for Lesson 18,  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch space between top and base guide lines.



Lesson No. 20

o p p q r s t u v w x y z z z z i

This alphabet depicts how a change in style may be effected by trimming up the ordinary single stroke Gothic with a different set of spurs, or serifs. In this case we proceed as with plain Gothic and add a compound curve serif, as shown in Fig. 5, Lesson

10. Using a No. 3 Style B Speedball pen throughout the operation gives us the heavy blunt effect instead of the fine point compound curve serif. Use a staff with  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch spaces.

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ONE HUNDRED LESSONS IN LETTERING

Lesson No. 21

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o

Proceed as in Lesson 20, using a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch space staff.

Repeat with a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch space staff, using a No. 2 B Speedball pen.

Lesson No. 22

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz &

Showing a squatty effect in  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch space staff, using a No. 4 Style B Speedball. Reproduce this cut, then enlarge to  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch space staff, 10-inch long, in

which space sketch and space the first 13 letters of the alphabet.

Repeat with the second 13 letters.



Lesson No. 23

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

These are quick single stroke Gothic numerals to match any of the preceding letter lessons, using

the pens suggested in the lesson. For size use the same guide lines as the capitals to match.



Lesson No. 24



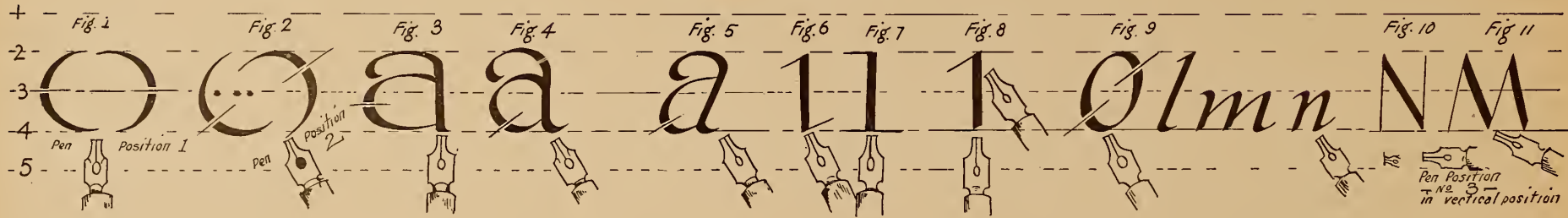
Having mastered the plain and serifed single stroke Gothic we introduce the single stroke Roman elements and letters. In the Gothic we have even width strokes throughout. In the Roman the shape of the basic principle elements is identical with the Gothic, the difference being in the accent, namely,

light and heavy lines. The heavy lines are called the accent. The construction and forms of the letters are identical with Gothic. The production of these elements is easily effected by pens adapted to the automatic production of the strokes, such as Hunt's 400 lettering pens or the music pens.



ONE HUNDRED LESSONS IN LETTERING

Lesson No. 25



Pen positions 1, 2, 3 and Figs. 1, 2, 10 and 11 primarily determined where the accent should appear on Roman letters.

Nowadays, in making Roman capitals, we use all down strokes, either with a pen or brush.

The first makers of Roman letters used a reed or quill pen fashioned with a broad flat nib, held in a nearly vertical position. The letters were written with this device. Beginning with the letter A the first stroke was made upward with the narrow edge of the pen. The second stroke was a downward stroke from left to right. The broad point of the

pen engages the writing surface, making a broad stroke. The cross bar and serifs were parallel lines made from left to right with the narrow edge. This arrangement of accent carries through the entire alphabet, with a single exception, the middle stroke of the z, which is made downward from right to left with the broad point, in heavy line.

In making single stroke Roman letters with either a flat pen or brush, holding positions 1 and 2, produced accents in different places on the same letter automatically. The results are different style letters, of the same classification, Roman (see Lessons 26 and 27).

Lesson No. 26

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

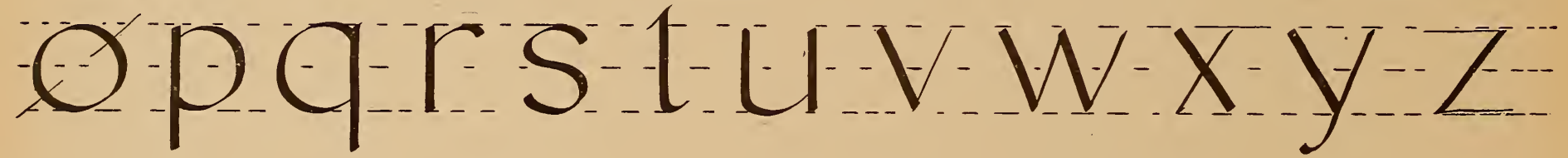
Rule  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch space staff, 10-inch long; proceed as with the usual Gothic operation, but using a Hunt No.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lettering pen held in normal writing position. A horizontal stroke from left to right, or right to left produces a thin line, as only the narrow chisel edge of the pen engages the writing surface. A downward vertical stroke, or downward stroke from left to right produces an "accented" or heavy line. When

the narrow chisel edge of the pen is parallel with the top line a downward stroke on the oval or circular elements automatically produces a gradually increasing width of line until the parallel center of the oval is reached, then a gradually decreasing thickness of line when the stroke approaches the base line, either on right or left oval elements.

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ONE HUNDRED LESSONS IN LETTERING

Lesson No. 27



When the narrow chisel edge of the pen is held on an angle with the top line the heaviest portions of the stroke or accent are reached on the lower left and upper right portions of the stroke below and above parallel center; consequently, different holding positions of this pen produce different characteristics in

a letter and if such positions are maintained throughout the process of making an entire alphabet, naturally the entire character of the alphabet is materially changed. Note elementary principles, Lessons 24 and 25, Fig. 1, Fig. 2.

Lesson No. 28

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

This example is the finished single stroke Roman, serifs attached.

Rule  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch space staff and reproduce the let-

ters in 10-inch space. Use Hunt's No.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lettering pen.



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Lesson No. 29

o p q r s t u v w x y z

The remainder of the single stroke Roman alphabet.

Rule  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch space staff and reproduce with lettering pen.





Lesson No. 30

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

The single stroke Roman upper case (capitals). The holding position of pen must continually be changed in making these characters with serifs attached. In the A, K, M, V, W, X, and Y we have a hair-line stroke drawn downward from right to left, and in the N two vertical hair lines. In order to

make these strokes the pen must be held nearly vertical by advancing the holder forward of the knuckle joint, and turning the narrow chisel edge of pen to a vertical position. Use a Hunt No. 2½ or a music pen.

Lesson No. 31

O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z &

In adding serifs to Roman letters a short parallel hair line should be drawn across the top and base of the vertical elements; additional strokes are required to round the serifs into the vertical. It will be found more difficult in attaching serifs to the hair line elements than to the accented strokes in both

caps and small letters, especially where the broad sizes of pens are used.

There is a knack of twisting the pen point up on its edge to be acquired. Intelligent and persistent practice is required in this feature.



Lesson No. 32

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

This is also a single stroke Roman letter, identical in principle with that shown in Lessons 28 and 29, but in this case we change the appearance by

the substitution of compound curve serifs, as shown in Fig. 5, Lesson 10. Use a music pen or Hunt's 400 No. 2.

Lesson No. 33

o p q r s t u v w x y z & ~

Continuation of the alphabet shown in Lesson 32. It will be advantageous to practice on these lessons on different widths of space staffs, using different sizes of lettering pens. On a small scale staff

use small pens. No. 1 pen is the largest size, No. 1½ next, No. 2 next, and so on down to No. 6, which is the smallest size.

Lesson No. 34

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

Single stroke Roman capitals on the same principle as Lessons 30 and 31. These have the com-

pound curve serifs to match the small letters shown in Lessons 32 and 33.



**Lesson No. 35**

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Continuation of the compound curve serif, single stroke Roman capitals.

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Lesson No. 36

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz Speed x

A unique style variation of the single stroke Roman letter accomplished by condensed spacing and narrowing the letters.

The serifs are of the swash variety, as shown in Fig. 6, of Lesson 11. Roman capitals should be used in connection with this alphabet.

## Lesson No. 37

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzoe

Another Roman variant, squatty in appearance, with high ascenders and low descenders.

When the ascenders and descenders equal the normal height of the small letters they are termed "High and Low."

When they are but half the height of the small

letters, occupying but one space of a five-line staff, they are termed "Medium."

When they exceed the height of small letters they are "Extra High and Low."

Use Roman capitals to match.

Lesson No. 38

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz modified Show  
card text ~

This is a characteristic variation of single stroke Roman that is very popular with showcard writers on account of its adaptability to speedy execution. It is one of the few letter styles that permit of a judicious mixture of principles, namely, Roman and text. The text styles admit of sharp angle terminals

which sometimes take the place of serifs. As these are more easily and rapidly made than regular serifs much time is saved in the making of copy. Also the Roman characteristic adds to the legibility of the text principles; hence, its popularity. These letters are made with Hunt's No. 400 lettering pens.

Lesson No. 39

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z &

Another rapid variation of single stroke Roman lower case, strictly single stroke in this instance as the elements and swashy serifs are a continuation of

the same stroke from beginning to end.

Any light face single stroke Roman capital may be used with this style letter.





Lesson No. 40

*ilvlcG)OcsTmsabq*

Showing the elementary strokes of the popular single stroke show card writer's Roman Italic. This is a speed exercise and the persistent practice of these elements will be found most beneficial in the production of various styles of fast lettering. Perfect uniformity of slant is necessary in all Italics.

Use a free combined muscular and finger move-

ment as prescribed by the most successful teachers of penmanship.

It may be well to remember that either pen or brush lettering as used by most successful show card writers is practically written, not drawn by laborious methods.

For this reason a letterer of show cards is called a show card writer.

Lesson No. 41

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz etc.

This number is one of the most popular Italic pen alphabets used by show card writers the world over, as it admits of the greatest speed in execution. It is strictly a single stroke letter, requires no subsequent retouching, as what serifs appear are made as

the beginning and ending of the letter strokes. These letters should be practiced on different scale size staffs, using different size lettering pens. Pencil slant guide lines to preserve uniformity of slant throughout.

ONE HUNDRED LESSONS IN LETTERING

Lesson No. 42

*a A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z*

The capitals to match small letters shown in Lesson 41, called Show Card Italic Capitals.



Lesson No. 43

O P Q R S T U V V W W X Y Z

Continuation of the alphabet "Show Card Italic Capitals." This alphabet should be practiced faithfully and with increasing speed, in various dimensions, using different sizes of pens. In order to cul-

tivate a uniform degree of slant in making Italics pencil in slant guide lines on your practice paper and conform all vertical elements to as nearly the same degree as possible.



Lesson No. 44

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz.

This is another style Roman Italic, showing a different and more classic style than the Show Card Italic. Note a less degree of slant, which for practice

should be preceded by pencil slant guide lines of uniform degree medium extenders.

For capitals see Lesson 71.

Lesson No. 45

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz Rapid *Italics*

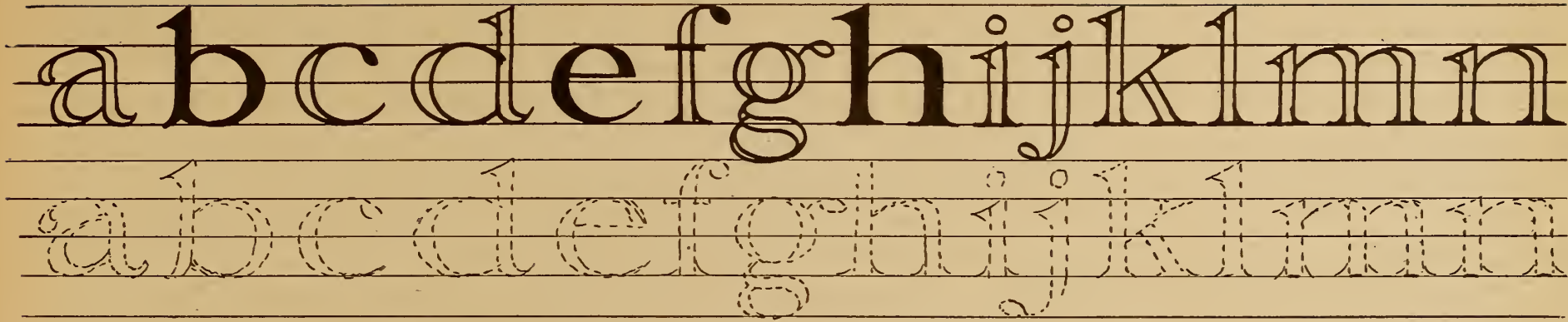
Another Roman Italic of artistic merit, slight degree of slant.

Rule a staff with leger lines for high and low ascenders and descenders.

For capitals see Lesson 71.



Lesson No. 46



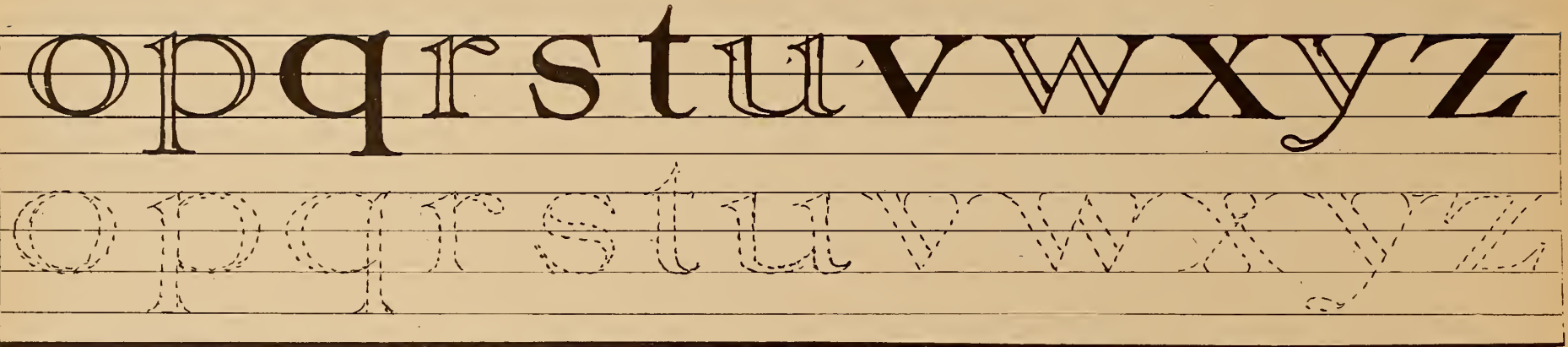
This illustration is for a comparative example showing the outlined or modeled form of lower case Roman (small letters).

Hundreds of styles are derived from the letters classed as Roman; they bear various type names too numerous to mention.

On this style letter we base all modifications of single stroke Roman.

Sketch staff and letter forms, after which ink in with a No. 5 Style A Speedball pen. These letters are not filled in in the copy in order to show outline method.

Lesson No. 47



Continuation of the alphabet shown in Lesson 46. Proceed as designated therein, after which the

outlines may be filled in with a larger pen or fine brush.



Lesson No. 48



The upper case Roman (capitals) to match Lessons 46 and 47.

It will be noted that Roman capitals occupy a space that is nearly square, with the exceptions of M and W, which are a fraction wider. The oval let-

ters all occupy a full space. The B, E, F, I, J, L, P, R and S are a fraction narrower than their neighbors.

Sketch staff and letters, outline with ink and fill in.

Lesson No. 49

O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Continuation of the alphabet shown in Lesson 48. Pens are a much faster medium than brushes on all letters not exceeding one inch in height. Small brushes are exceedingly difficult to manipulate,

owing to the absence of the feel of contact with the writing surface, consequently much greater speed may be attained on small lettering by the use of proper style lettering pens.

Lesson No. 50

abcdefghijklmnopqrstu

We will now take up brush lettering. The staff principle of ruling alignment is the same as for pen work.

A cheap brush means a like class of work no matter how great the operator's skill. The best lettering brushes for water colors are of red sable, called "Riggers." For oil or Japan colors, camel hair quill brushes are used. The show card writer who knows his business never uses oil or Japan colors.

They are too slow in the production of letters. Any of the popular brands of show card colors are good. They are all called Distemper Colors, meaning, colors ground in water with sufficient gum arabic or mucilage added to prevent rubbing when dry and to insure a free, even stroke of the brush, to cover in one stroke. Special mention of proper materials is made elsewhere in these lessons.

Lesson No. 51

v w x y z ~ lower-case <sup>or</sup> small letters

The alphabet shown in Lessons 50 and 51 is practically the same as the first pen lessons, single stroke Gothic. In this case we use a No. 4 Rigger, round ferrule. Successful brush work requires that

the brush, which is round, shall be worked out to a flat chisel edge in the color, which should be sufficiently gummy to retain the brush in chisel shape. See illustration on how to hold a brush correctly.



Lesson No. 52

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R

This example shows the single stroke Gothic capitals to match the preceding lessons. An individuality is added to these letters by using full rounded curves instead of ovals on all letters containing oval elements. Likewise individuality is apparent in the vertical element letters by condensing

or narrowing the width; also the cross lines in B, E, F, G, H, N, P and R are above center.

Rule guide lines  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch apart, and on practice paper rule guide lines one inch apart and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch. Practice these letters in different sizes.

Lesson No. 53

STUVWXYZ& O C D G STYLE S O

Continuation of the single stroke brush Gothic with a few variations in which the wide ovals are narrowed. The base of the S enlarged, the vertical

of the G shortened, the base of the E lengthened.

In making single stroke Gothic letters the brush is rolled between the thumb and index finger.



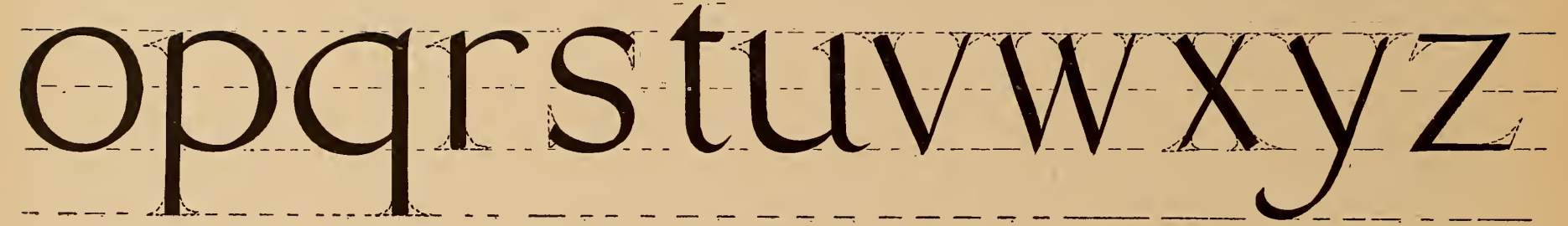
Lesson No. 54

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

Here we have the preliminary formation of single stroke Roman, lower case, made with a rigger brush, chisel shaped, which may be said to work on

the same principle as the Hunt 400 lettering pen in automatically producing the elementary strokes. Serifs have been omitted in this example.

## Lesson No. 55



o p q r s t u v w x y z

Continuation of the single stroke Roman with the position and shape of the serifs indicated by dotted lines. The letter t in Roman lettering is usually made  $\frac{1}{2}$  the height of the ascenders. These examples must be faithfully practiced on different

sizes of staff ruling, using Nos. 4, 6 and 8 rigger brushes, and small letters may be made as high as  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches by the single stroke method by using larger brushes.

Lesson No. 56

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 \$

Outlined or modeled Roman numerals. This is considered a standard style by the best show card

writers. The figures 2, 4, 7, 0 have been filled in to illustrate the finished appearance.



Lesson No. 57

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 \$ " #

This is a unique set of numerals made by single stroke method. The different heights is an individual characteristic which may be dispensed with at

the option of the operator. Practice with guide lines 1 inch apart,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch, using different size brushes.



Lesson No. 58

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The ability to make good numerals rapidly is the chief asset of the show card writer, as he has innumerable price tickets to make daily.

This example of bold Roman Italic numerals

is effected by using a No. 6 rigger well filled with color, and not worked down to a sharp chisel shape, but worked fairly blunt chiseled.

Lesson No. 59

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0.**

A poster numeral, based on Gothic. Depending upon the size these figures may be either single stroke or outline construction, as indicated in the copy. After sufficient proficiency has been ac-

quired most of these styles may be produced by the single stroke modeled method and the edges and sharp points trimmed up afterward.

Lesson No. 60



This is the Gothic poster brush letter, very popular where extreme bold face lettering is required. It is here shown in various stages of construction. The variations of the elementary strokes lend character to the letter and may be changed at the option of the operator, providing the

changes are not too eccentric. Note flat tops on C and G.

For small sizes single stroke of this letter use a Style A Speedball pen. Top and base guide lines should be ruled and the size of the letters to be made should govern size of brush to be used.

Lesson No. 61

**PQRSTUVWXYZCAS.**

Balance of alphabet shown in Lesson 60. These have been blacked up or filled in, showing more black letter face than white background. The black face would be more pronounced were it not

for V, W, X, Y grouping together.

The object of black face poster lettering of any description is for that effect—more letter face than background.

Lesson No. 62

**abcdefghijklmnop**

A single stroke poster Gothic, made with a No. 8 rigger brush, chisel pointed in the color. Its chief characteristic is obtained by the addition of blunt nose compound curve serifs rounded into the ver-

tical elements, as shown in Fig. 5, Lesson 10. The color should be sufficiently thick to prevent spreading or flooding the stroke.

Lesson No. 63

opqrstuvwxyza&

Continuation of lower case alphabet shown in Lesson 61. Note close spacing.

A selection of size of brush to be used is gov-

erned by the width of stroke letter desired. This must be determined by the operator.





Lesson No. 64

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M**

The capitals to match lower case brush letters shown in Lessons 62 and 63.



T 371  
.G 6

Lesson No. 65

**N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

Continuation of single stroke brush Gothic poster with compound curve serifs. These letters

may be made as large as six inches in height with a No. 20 rigger brush.



Lesson No. 66



Illustrating the elementary principles of brush outlining or modeling upper case Roman letters. The formation of these principles is the same as embodied in Lessons 48 and 49, which were executed

with a Speedball pen. Note the brush stroke elements and methods of constructing the serifs. The principle of accent in all Roman lettering is identical regardless of the tool used in the making.

## Lesson No. 67

G H I J K L M N O P

Note the principle of accent in Roman lettering. All vertical strokes are accented except the first element in M, the first and third element in N and the third element in U.

All obliques or strokes drawn downward from left to right are accented or heavy lines.

All obliques or strokes drawn downward from

right to left are thin lines, except in the Z.

All horizontal elements, like cross lines in A, H and T, the serifs are thin lines. The top and bases of all oval or circular elements as in B, C, D, G, J, O, R, S, P, Q, in the circular or oval elements and U are thin; the accent appears heaviest on the parallel center of the oval.

Lesson No. 68

Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Primarily the Roman letters consisted of capitals only. The small letters came into general use after the art of printing was invented. Prior to that time small Roman letters were written with broad

chisel pointed reeds or pens of the stub variety. The principle of accent was imposed on the letters as written with pens of this nature as explained in Lessons 28 and 29, the single stroke pen Roman.

Lesson No. 69

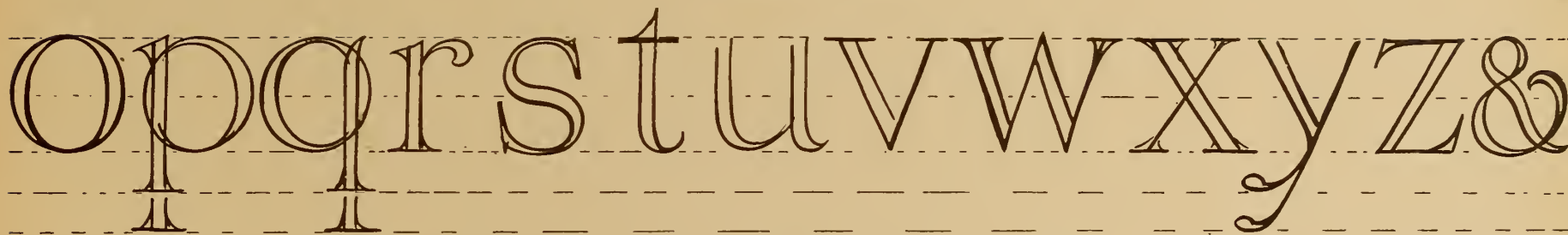
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

Outlined or modeled lower case brush Roman, serifs attached, medium ascenders, medium de-

scenders and additional low descenders attached to the same letter for illustration.



## Lesson No. 70



Continuation of the lower case brush outlined or modeled Roman, showing medium and low descenders. The object in illustrating the Roman letters in outline model is mainly to familiarize the student with the correct basic forms of these letters. They are thus more easily visualized as models from which to create individual styles and conceptions by the single stroke method, either with brush or pen.

For be it known, that the present day letter-

crafters must be able to produce large quantities of work in limited time. To this end we have devised artistic, commercial modifications of all types of letters by the single stroke free hand method. In this we have been immeasurably aided by modernization of lettering devices in the shape of pens, brushes, etc. All of which the student must become familiar with and proficient in the use and handling thereof.

**Lesson No. 71**

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

A characteristic line of Roman Italic capitals. With the required slant variation these capitals can be used to match almost all small Roman Italics, also adapted to capitalized groups or paragraphs or

pages of reading matter wherever semi-ornamental effect is desired. Use wide space between lines to allow high or low swash terminals whenever desired.

Lesson No. 72

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

In this lesson is presented the first of a series of single stroke brush Roman letters, designed by leading, modern and successful show card writers, commercial artists and moving picture title writers. They are thoroughly practical for commercial purposes, principally on account of their adaptability to rapid execution, combined with legibility and artistic appearance when properly arranged in reading form.

The size of the letters is determined by the space in which they go, and the size of the brush to be used is governed by the size of the letters.

In this instance we use a No. 4 rigger brush and  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch space staff. Aligning arrangement is omitted herewith in order that the student may test his ability on the ruling up for any specified size letters.

Lesson No. 73

n o p q r s t u v w x y z u &

Second half of alphabet in Lesson 72. These two lessons should be practiced in different sizes with varying dimensions of staff arrangement. Do

not attempt to crowd too many letters of a given height in too short a space. Wide spacing is often used to denote emphasis, as is Italics.

Lesson No. 74

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

Capitals to match Lessons 72 and 73, which should also be practiced in different sizes.



Lesson No. 75

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Second half of alphabet in Lesson 74. Proceed as designated, making in various sizes.





Lesson No. 76

*Added line for High Ascenders. . .*

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Illustrating an eccentric single stroke brush Roman, practical and very popular with many picture title writers. Note the serifs used, which are illustrated and explained in Fig. 10, Lesson 11.

Copy in different sizes using same size brush, No. 4 rigger, as this is a fine line or light face letter no matter what the size is.

Lesson No. 77

o p q r s t u v w v w x y z

Second half of alphabet 76. Proceed as instructed.

Endeavor to cultivate a free, swingy stroke of the brush.



Lesson No. 78

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

Caps to match Lessons 76 and 77.

Lesson No. 79

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Second half of alphabet shown in preceding copy. Note the swash line finish on terminals of the N, W, Y, Z, the tail of the R and Q, and the swash

top of the T. The U is similar in finish to the small letter. To designate capitals are horizontal top serifs.

Lesson No. 80

HIGH ASCENDERS - ADDED LINE.

*a b c d e f g h i j k l m n n*

MEDIUM DESCENDERS

The Italics to match Lessons 76 and 77. These have high ascenders and medium descenders, swash line serifs on b, d, f, k, and the terminal serifs of m

and n may be swashed if desirable to spacing arrangement. The hook on the g is also swashed.

In practice, rule slant guide lines as designated.



Lesson No. 81

*n o p q r s t u v w x y z &*

Second half of alphabet 80. Diversion in second element of n swashed which may also be used in making the h, m, a and character &. Also the

last element of the v, w and y may be swashed as shown in the small letters of Lesson 77.



Lesson No. 82

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

Eccentric Italic caps to match Lessons 80 and 81. These may be effectively changed in appearance by adopting different degrees of slant which in the practice thereof should be preceded by penciling slant guide lines with a "T" square, with the

"T" engaging the base of the drawing board and the paper thumb-tacked to the board in the degree of slant desired. Note the J is made with a medium descender. Also the middle stroke of the N is swashed.

Lesson No. 83

OPQRSTUVWXYZ

Second half of Italic capital alphabet. Swash  
Q and R terminals; swash top of T.

The terminals of V, U and Y may be swash  
finished the same style as in Lesson 79.

Lesson No. 84

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

Another artistic light face single stroke brush variant of Roman lower case in which a changed appearance is effected by the attachment of curved

serifs as illustrated and explained in Fig. 3, Lesson 10. Further variation may be effected by swashing terminals of the a, h, and m.

Lesson No. 85

n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Continuation of Lesson 84. The dainty little peculiarities of finishing up a letter is largely a matter of individual technic, and in brush work can only be successfully acquired by persistent effort

and practice on the part of the student after having studied the peculiarities of manipulating a brush which is largely instrumental in imparting individuality to any style, size or form of letter.

Lesson No. 86

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

Capitals to match Lessons 84 and 85, same style serif. These caps are made slightly heavier

face, or stroke, than the small letters by using a next size larger brush.



Lesson No. 87

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Continuation of alphabet in Lesson 86. The chief characteristic of this letter is imparted by the compound curve serif, which is accomplished by a

dainty manipulation of the brush held vertically between the thumb and tip of the index or first finger.



Lesson No. 88

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

A popular single stroke brush variant of Roman. This is one of the most rapid styles of single stroke Roman letters, as practically all the elements (including the serifs) are made with a single swash stroke, eliminating the necessity of a second operation in attaching the serifs which is obviously a time-

saving expedient. These serifs are shown in Fig. 6, Lesson 11.

The varying degree of thickness in the strokes is imparted by either increasing or decreasing the pressure on the brush point as the occasion demands.



Lesson No. 89

o p q r s t u v w x y z &

Continuation of the small alphabet of Lesson 88. A desirable change in appearance may be effected in this alphabet by making all the base line

serifs straight horizontal, leaving the top serifs as they are in the copy.

Lesson No. 90

A B C D E F G H I J K L M ~

Caps to match Lessons 88 and 89. Note the low cross bars of A, E, F, G and low tail of K.



T371  
G6

Lesson No. 91

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Continuation of alphabet No. 90. All these exercises should be practiced on a different scale of sizes.

Lesson No. 92

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

This illustrates a modern variant of modeled Roman. Serifs are of compound curve form rounded into the vertical elements. Cross bars, tops and base lines are also rounded into the vertical which

intensifies the modeled effect. This is more noticeable in the capitals than in the small letters. Use a No. 6 rigger brush.

Lesson No. 93

opq r s t u v w x y z & ”

Continuation of alphabet in Lesson 92. Note that the downward oblique elements of V and W

are slightly curved and rounded into the junction.



Lesson No. 94

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

Capitals to match Lessons 92 and 93. Note the junctions of cross bars, tops and base lines and

all the serifs are rounded into the angles formed by junctions.



Lesson No. 95

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Continuation of modeled capital alphabet Lesson 94. These are made in the size shown with a

No. 6 rigger brush worked down to a fine chisel point in the color.

Lesson No. 96

*abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz*

An artistic conception of Italics made with a music pen, swashy effect throughout with a varying degree of thickness in the down strokes.

For caps to match use any swashy Roman Italic made on the same slant as the small letters shown here.

T371  
G6

Lesson No. 97

*abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz &*

Italic with single brush strokes. Note straight horizontal line serifs on base line of h, i, k, l, m, n, p, r. Swash line serifs of tops of all letters except

p, t, u and y, high and low extended letters, except p, t. For caps to match, use any plain or swashy Roman Italics, made on the same slant.

Lesson No. 98

Text r q i l s O u w x y z

Elementary strokes and letters of a modified variant of Old English Text, most easily and rapidly made by the swing stroke method, using a Hunt 400, No. 1 largest size lettering pen. Larger sizes

may be made with flat marking pens or rigger brushes worked down to a flat chisel shape. This plate shows the elementary strokes or principles involved in text lettering.

Lesson No. 99

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u

Continuation of text alphabet Lesson 98. These letters should be practiced on different size scales. The regular staff guide is used for text lettering, but for small letters additional guide lines

may be added, as shown in the cut. These are used in preliminary practice to preserve uniformity of depth in the angles where they join the vertical elements at top and base.





Lesson No. 100

A B C D E F G H I J K L M  
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z &

Modified text capitals to match small letters, Lessons 98 and 99.

Text caps are never used except singly wherever capitalization is necessary, or as initial letters,

as they are too intricate and ornamental to be legible in masses of reading matter. Use top and base lines with additional inside guide lines for junction points of angles with verticals.

## SUGGESTIONS ON THE PREPARATION AND USE OF COLORS, PENS, BRUSHES, ETC.

Aside from personal ability to execute, there are numerous difficulties which arise from the improper use of lettering pens and brushes, and the lack of knowledge in preparing colors.

The word "colors" is used regardless of tint or hue and implies any paint used by the letterer.

Almost any ordinary dry color, in powder form, may be reduced to brushable shape by simply mixing with sufficient mucilage to form a thick paste, add a small quantity of glycerine, then thin with water to a consistency that will flow with an even pull from the brush stroke yet be sufficiently gummy to hold the hair ends together either in pointed or chisel edge shape, depending upon the style of letters attempted.

The same colors may be used for pen lettering by the addition of sufficient water to permit a free flow from the pen.

Dry colors that have a gritty or coarse grain should be ground fine while in the paste form. This is most easily accomplished by placing a small

quantity of the color paste on a slab of marble or plate glass and working the lumps and grit out with a flexible blade case knife or artist's spatula.

For mixing white, use either Dry French Zinc, American, or Green Seal Zinc.

For black, use Swedish Drop Black, or a beautiful smooth velvety blue black may be obtained by reducing Germantown Lampblack to a paste with Sanford's Royal Crown Mucilage. A small quantity of denatured alcohol and glycerine will help the process as lampblack is rather greasy. Add to this paste about one-fifth quantity of dry ultramarine blue. Mix thoroughly and thin with water as usual. A selection of tints and colors as selected may be prepared in the same manner.

There are various ready-to-use colors and inks on the market if one is not prepared to make up his own mixtures.

There are no colored fluid lettering inks made that are thoroughly opaque when dry. Colored inks are transparent, do not dry evenly nor cover thoroughly. This condition is due to lack of pig-

ment body in the dyes used in making ink. Consequently, if colors are wanted for pen work it is necessary to use very finely ground dry colors. Prepare as for brush work and keep thinned with water to the proper flowing consistency, and frequently stirred to keep the color pigment in solution. This can be best determined by experiment, as no two colors act exactly alike for this purpose.

For brushes, use a selection of sizes as found necessary. Do not experiment with or use cheap brushes. They are most expensive in the long run. For water color lettering, such as show card writing, poster lettering, or lettering for reproduction purposes, use standard brands of Red Sable Riggers.

Never trim a brush by cutting the ends with a knife or scissors—wet the hair, smooth the tip or straggling hairs over the edge of a card and file the hairs off smooth with a piece of fine emery paper pasted on a flat strip of wood. This may also be used to smooth up a rough or scratchy lettering pen.

—W. H. GORDON.



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